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## Message from the Mayor

It is estimated that there are up to 400,000 African immigrants in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area – many of them in the District of Columbia. Last month, I was pleased to sign important legislation to reach out to this community and provide essential services and programs for this rapidly expanding population.

The new legislation will create the District's first Office of African Affairs and Commission on African Affairs – joining other constituent offices in the District government that represent the city's ethnically diverse community.

We can all see the contribution that the African community has made to our city. Take, for example, the great restaurant scene at the 1900 block of Ninth Street, Northwest, which is locally known as "Little Ethiopia." Ethiopians represent the largest component of our immigrant African community. I am very pleased to see more culture and flavor added to our already diverse city.

Today, African immigrants account for roughly 16 percent of recent arrivals in our area. They are a very vibrant part of our city, and this new legislation will ensure they are better represented in city government. The Office will be under the executive branch of the District government and will serve to help this constituency find information on jobs, housing, health care, and other vital services when they move to the District. The 15-member Commission will keep the Mayor advised, as well as the Council and the Office of African Affairs, of current and upcoming needs and views of African communities in the District.

The Office and Commission on African Affairs are important components of our continuing effort to ensure that we meet the needs of District residents. I welcome the addition of these new entities as we strive to ensure current and newly arriving African immigrants have all necessary programs and services at their disposal.



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Department of Human Services

Office of Tax and Revenue

Department of Parks and Recreation

Department of Employment Services

Metropolitan Police Department

Office of Boards and Commissions

Commission on the Arts and Humanities

LINKS TO OTHER WEBSITES

Hands on DC

DC Convention and Tourism

DC Public Library

# Emancipation Day in the District

Emancipation Day is Monday, April 17, and I wanted to take this time to remind District residents of the importance of this holiday and what we are doing to commemorate it.

The District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation Act was passed by Congress and signed by President Abraham Lincoln on April 16, 1862, to free 3,100 slaves in the District of Columbia. The Act was passed nine months before President Abraham Lincoln issued his famous Emancipation Proclamation.

On January 4, 2005, I signed a bill to designate Emancipation Day as a recognized legal holiday in the District of Columbia. The theme for this year's celebration will be "**Honoring Our Heroes in the Struggle for Freedom.**" In the spirit of the theme, Dr. Dorothy I. Height will receive the Emancipation Day Lifetime Achievement Award and the key to the city. Poetry readings, community forums, lecture series, parades, and concerts will take place throughout the week.

At 11 a.m. on Monday, we will kick off the day with a parade on Pennsylvania Avenue between 4th and 14th Streets, NW. Following the parade there will be a program, entertainment, a concert and fireworks.

For more information on Emancipation Day, please visit: <http://emancipationDay.dc.gov>.

## The Annual Cherry Blossom Festival

Our annual Cherry Blossom Festival drew to a close on Sunday, and I am proud to say that it was a rousing success!

The District of Columbia "owns" spring in this country, and it's because of this great international festival. The numerous events throughout the week, from the parade, performances, and arts and crafts, make this festival an amazing event for our city's residents and visiting families.

The Cherry Blossom Festival commemorates the 1912 gift to the city of Washington of 3,000 cherry trees from Mayor Yukio Ozaki of Tokyo to enhance the growing friendship between the United States and Japan. Today, we are friends with people from all over the world. Every year, we are becoming more and more an international city. We can see that in the multiple ethnicities represented in the District, as well as the people who visit from around the globe.

The Cherry Blossom Festival draws one million visitors and residents annually to the Tidal Basin. This event allows them to experience our city first-hand, and rest assured, they will definitely be back to experience it again.

Additionally, the festival is a huge economic engine for our city. The thousands of tourists spend money at DC restaurants, hotels, and shopping areas, which helps the city fund vital services and programs that benefit all residents.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported the festival and the city this year. Without the enthusiasm of Washingtonians, the Cherry Blossom Festival would not be the world-renowned event it is today.

## National Music Center Launches in Northwest

The Carnegie Library has been part of the fabric of District life for more than 100 years, so last week, I was pleased to announce that the National Music Center (NMC) is moving into a part of the Carnegie Library, which was formerly the City Museum (across the street from the Washington Convention Center).

The Historical Society of Washington, DC, and the National Music Center have entered an agreement that calls for the Music Center to occupy the space for the next three years. During its occupancy, the Music Center, to be known as "the Gig," will offer a wide variety of performances, classes, exhibits, and special events. NMC programs will feature many Washington area musicians and performers.

Yamaha has agreed to outfit the entire building with state-of-the-art music equipment, recording equipment, and musical instruments. The Los Angeles-based InTune Foundation will make major contributions to the NMC media program including using "the Gig" for television broadcasts developed for youngsters of middle-school age.

No city in this country is more steeped in rich musical traditions. From John Phillip Sousa, Duke Ellington and Roberta Flack to Marvin Gaye and Chuck Brown, the District has been home to dozens of famous musicians. I can't think of a better way to celebrate their contributions and their place in national music history than to bring the National Music Center into the Carnegie Library.



# Making Healthcare Better for Inmates

BRC Alerts

DCLMPC Partnership Works!

DCOA Spotlight on Aging

DHS Outreach

DISB DC Financial Gateway Express

OAG Inter Alia...

OAPIA Updates

OPGD Grant Funding Alerts

All of us benefit when our residents who are incarcerated return to our communities as healthier individuals. Therefore, I was pleased to announce last week a new model of health care delivery for inmates in District jail facilities, including the Correctional Detention Facility and the Correctional Treatment Facility.

Instead of being treated as an isolated population, they will be considered part of the city's overall community who are temporarily misplaced.

Community-Oriented Correctional Health Services (COCHS) is being funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to provide intensive technical assistance to Unity Health Care, which will provide care to inmates. This plan is based on a model established in Hampden County, Massachusetts, which has been the recipient of national awards.

More than 19,000 individuals pass through the District's detention center each year. As a result, our correctional facilities, as most others in the nation, can play a major role in promoting public health as a major provider of basic human services.

Many of these people do not consistently seek health services. This new program will provide an excellent opportunity to identify and develop treatment plans for chronic and communicable diseases. Unity Health Care doctors will ensure that each released inmate receives a full care plan and appointment at a community health center.

The corrections system can serve as a leverage point to connect to harder-to-reach, high-risk population. Inmates leaving the system will be in better health and better prepared to live with the outside public. In the end, this will make the District a healthier and safer place.

## Soccer and Baseball Seasons Begin

It is an exciting time for sporting events in DC and the enormous advantages that will be seen in our city.

I had the honor to throw out the "first pitch" to kick off the Nationals' season at their first home exhibition game. This served as a fresh reminder of what great benefits a new stadium at the Anacostia Waterfront is going to bring to all DC residents, whether they decide to attend a game or not.

We had more than 2.7 million fans attend games last season, certainly an amazing success in the Nationals' first year. I expect this number to grow even further, especially when the new ballpark opens in 2008 in Southeast. While having a new baseball team and stadium are great news, the economic benefits are even better.

Most of the people working at RFK stadium are District residents, providing employment to those in search of a job. Additionally, most of the people attending games are from outside our city – roughly 70 percent are from Maryland and Virginia. This revenue can then be used to fund services such as housing and education, programs we all care deeply about.

We are also working on a stadium at the Anacostia Waterfront for the DC United soccer team. I just helped celebrate the launch of DC United's tenth season in the District. I am not only proud of the championships they have won while representing our city, but also their commitment to our community. The team recently launched "United Soccer Club," an after-school program that will benefit youth east of the Anacostia River.

Sporting events are fun to attend and provide fantastic entertainment to their fans. But most importantly, these teams revitalize neighborhoods through their enormous economic benefits and by engaging in community service. While the new stadiums are still a couple years away, our city is already seeing the advantages of having these teams. Go out, enjoy a game, and see for yourself.

For more information on both teams, please visit: [nationals.com](http://nationals.com) or <http://dcunited.mlsnet.com>.



## District Activities



Mayor Williams spoke at the annual cherry blossom lantern lighting ceremony.



Mayor Williams delivered remarks during the renaming of Watts Branch Park to Marvin Gaye Park. In January 2006, the DC Council passed a resolution set forth by Mayor Williams to rename the park. Marvin Gaye was a native Washingtonian and grew up across the street from the park in Lincoln Heights Dwellings.



Mayor Williams threw out the ceremonial "first pitch" at the Washington Nationals' first home exhibition game at RFK against the Baltimore Orioles.

## Community News

- [DC Attracts Major Retailer for Woodies Building](#)
- [Mayor Touts Increased Spending on Libraries, Children, Public Health in Testimony Before House Subcommittee](#)
- [Mayor Urges MLB, Comcast, MASN to Resolve Differences Regarding Broadcast of Washington Nationals' Games](#)

## Upcoming Events

[View All News Releases](#)

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| <b>4/17</b> | <b>Emancipation Day Parade</b><br>11 am–1:30 pm<br>Freedom Plaza<br>Pennsylvania Avenue (between 4th and 14th Streets)  |
| <b>4/17</b> | <b>Emancipation Day Program</b><br>1:30 pm–8:15 pm<br>Freedom Plaza<br>Pennsylvania Avenue (between 4th and 14th Streets)<br>Entertainment, concerts, fireworks                     |
| <b>4/20</b> | <b>Fifth Annual Fair Housing Symposium</b><br>8:30 am–4:30 pm<br>DC Housing Finance Agency<br>815 Florida Avenue, NW  |
| <b>4/21</b> | <b>National and Global Youth Service Day Opening Ceremony</b><br>4 pm–6 pm<br>Turkey Thicket Rec Center<br>1100 Michigan Avenue, NE<br>For further information, call (202) 727-7925 |
| <b>4/28</b> | <b>Pandemic Flu Summit</b><br>8:30 am–4:30 pm<br>Kellogg Conference Center<br>800 Florida Avenue, NE  |

